

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of the Claims

Claims 4-6, 8-9, 12, 14, 24, 27-35, and 40 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 10, 11, 13, 15, 20, 25, and 26 are currently being amended. Claim 43 has been added. After amending the claims as set forth above, Claims 1-3, 7, 10-11, 13, 15-23, 25-26, and 36-39, and 41-43 are now pending in the present application.

Allowed Claims

In Section 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner allowed Claims 1-3, 7, 16-23, 25-26, 36-39, and 42. Applicants thank the Examiner for the allowance of these claims.

New Claim

New claim 43 has been added. Claim 43 depends from independent Claim 1 and does not introduce any new matter. See Application ¶ 0050, Figures 1-5.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In Section 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 10-11, 13-15, and 40-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,400,916 ("Weber") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,210,382 ("Hogg").

Claims 14 and 40 have been canceled without prejudice and are no longer pending in the present application. Claims 10, 11, 13, and 15 have been amended. As amended, Claims 10, 11, 13, and 15 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 1, which has been allowed by the Examiner. Because dependent Claims 10, 11, 13, and 15, as amended, depend from independent Claim 1, dependent Claims 10, 11, 13, and 15 are also allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of dependent Claims 10, 11, 13, and 15.

Dependent Claim 41 has been rejected. However, dependent Claim 41 depends from independent Claim 16, which the Examiner stated was allowed. Because Claim 41 depends from independent Claim 16, Claim 41 is also allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of dependent Claim 41.

Statement on Examiner's Reasons for the Rejections

The claims rejected by the Examiner have been amended solely for the purpose of obtaining quick allowance of the claims. Applicants wish to emphasize that in making such amendments, Applicants in no way acquiesce in the Examiner's reasons for the rejections of the claims. Applicants expressly reserve the right to file one or more continuing applications that include claims the Examiner rejected during the prosecution of this application. Applicants do not intend for any amendment made during the prosecution of this application to affect the scope of any claims that may be presented in any continuing applications.

* * * *

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 06-1447. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 06-1447. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1447.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

5/5/04

By



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